

I rise today to support the amendment offered by my friend and colleague from New York, Mrs. Lowey. This amendment would restore vital funding to the Title X family planning program. Now I am all for reducing our deficit and getting our fiscal house in order, but let's be clear on something: This cut to Title X will not save money.

The proponents of eliminating family planning funds want us to believe that cutting these funds is "fiscally responsible" and has to be done to balance our budget. But what they don't want us to know is that investing in family planning actually saves money. For every public dollar invested in family planning, taxpayers save nearly \$4.

So while cutting family planning appears to be a savings up front, over the long run it will cost us, both in dollars and the health and wellbeing of millions of women. While we are being honest, let's also discuss the other motive of the proponents of cutting Title X. They argue that cutting funds for family planning will reduce abortions. Once again they are wrong. In fact, if they wanted to reduce abortions, they would increase funding for Title X.

Why? Because Title X services prevent nearly one million unintended pregnancies each year, almost half of which would otherwise end in abortion. If we want to get serious about cutting federal spending and reducing abortions, a good start would be investing in Title X, not eliminating it, which is exactly what this amendment will do.

Of course in addition to reducing unintended pregnancies and saving taxpayers' money, family planning providers, like Planned Parenthood, provide essential life-saving and preventive care. In 2009, Title X providers performed 2.3 million breast exams, 2.2 million pap tests, over six million tests for STIs, and close to one million HIV tests. For six out of ten women who receive care from women's health centers, this is their only source of health care. Eliminating all funds for family planning would cut millions of women off from their primary, and in many cases only, source of health care.

To the millions of women out there who want comprehensive reproductive health care: This is what they think of you. They think that women should not have access to basic reproductive health care, including birth control. Recent legislation revealed that they think you shouldn't be able to access care if you are victim of rape or incest. This is what they think of you.

All these bills reveal the true mindset of the opponents of choice: Women are not capable of making their own decisions about their own health and their own lives. These cuts to family planning programs would have a devastating impact in my community. Ten Planned Parenthood health centers in Illinois provide primary and preventive care including flu vaccines, diabetes screening, and cholesterol screening would be forced to close. This would affect approximately 30,000 low-income patients and eliminate the jobs of 200 health center workers.

Not exactly the kind of job-stimulating legislation we should be focusing on. The conversation we're having today is not about choice, but choices. With family planning we can reduce abortions and save the federal government money. Without, we only pretend to do either. With family planning, we can embrace educating and providing health care to women. Without, we abandon women when they need care the most. With family planning, we can empower the women of America. Without, we undermine them.

We have the choice. And we must choose to stand up to these attacks and fight back against the mistruths because the health, well-being, and lives of millions of women and their families are at stake. This amendment is a strike against these wrong-headed cuts to family planning, and I encourage my colleagues to restore funding to Title X family planning programs, and vote yes on Mrs. Lowey's amendment.